

April 26, 2006

I am unable to attend the April 27, 2006 meeting of the Committee on Forestry, Conservation and Outdoor Recreation, and am therefore submitting my comments to you in the hope you will take them into account as you deliberate the merits of HB 971 and HB 972.

Our citizen group, Save Our State Land, has been struggling to save a 600-acre park in western Oakland County that is part of the Proud Lake Recreation Area owned by the State, indeed, owned by its **citizens**. These citizens have been given various reasons by the DNR for why it no longer feels this park should be preserved or available for their use. Although we have had several conversations with the DNR about the reasons this natural habitat and open space are vital to Oakland County, and given them 4,000 petition signatures, the more we insist it should be saved, the more intent DNR becomes in disposing of it. If Commerce Township does not agree to pay many millions of dollars to buy the park, it will be up for auction to developers.

The bottom line here is: DNR is not listening to the will of the citizens it serves. Therefore, although we support the need for legislative oversight in protecting parkland, HB 971 and HB 972 will not save parkland like Proud Lake Recreation Area. First, it is now located "outside the boundaries" the DNR has recently drawn up, and second, the DNR is free to sell any park it chooses with no recourse by the citizens of Michigan.

Therefore, the Save Our State Land Steering Committee requests that HB 971 and HB 972 be **amended** to include real citizen oversight, or another mechanism for checking the power of the DNR, not a perfunctory advisory committee that will be wasting its time if it makes any recommendations contrary to the will of DNR's leadership.

Respectfully,

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